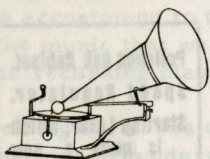


# Hillandale



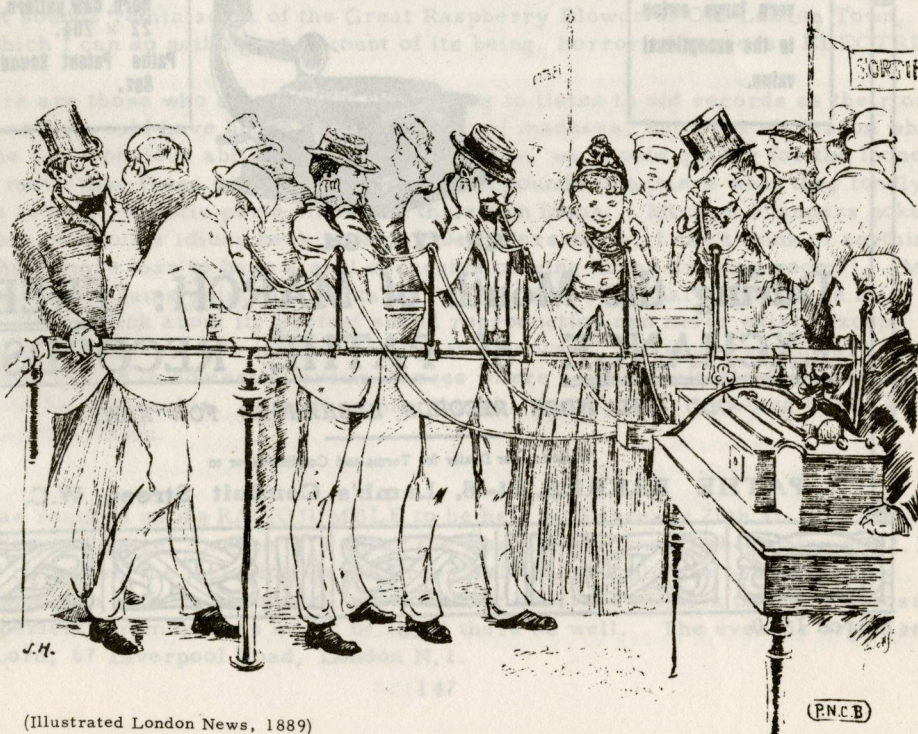
Journal of the  
City of London  
Phonograph and  
Gramophone Society

THE HILLANDALE NEWS

FEBRUARY 1983 No 130

ISSN-0018-1846

HOW THEY LISTEN TO THE PHONOGRAPH.  
A HASTY SKETCH AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION.

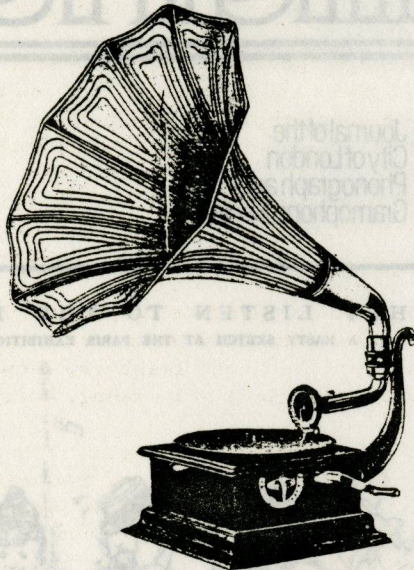


(Illustrated London News, 1889)

**GREAT SUCCESS**  
OF THE  
**"SCOUT" PATHÉPHONE**  
NO NEEDLES REQUIRED.

This is undoubtedly  
the finest Machine  
at the price on  
the Market.

The demand for this  
Model has been  
very large owing  
to the exceptional  
value.



Polished Oak Cabinet.  
Speed Regulator,  
Starting Lever, which  
is quite a new  
invention.

Very Strong Improved  
Motor.

Beautifully Enamelled  
Horn, new pattern,  
22 x 20½.

Pathe Patent Sound  
Box.

£22 17s. 6d.

**During the Month of MARCH: FREE  
EXCHANGE of PATHE RECORDS.**

OLD AND WORN RECORDS EXCHANGED FOR NEW.

Write to your Dealer for Terms and Conditions, or to

**PATHE FRÈRES, 14-18, Lamb's Conduit Street, W.C.**

# Edchat

A recent bit of furniture moving at home resulted in a Library Bijou Grand finding its way into the drawing room in place of the player piano, and once it was there, it seemed only right to play it occasionally. The Library Bijou is such a quaint, old-fashioned machine compared to the more familiar cabinet models of the 1920s, that its charm somehow makes up for the uninteresting sound produced by nearly all cabinet models of the pre-1925 period. However, when I started playing an acoustic recording of the Brahms Second Symphony (one of a series of records by Landon Ranold I started collecting in a foolish phase some years ago), even I wondered how anyone could actually have enjoyed listening to this cacophony in the 1920s.

As I played the set through, however (dogged determination wins the day) my ears became accustomed to the noise and to 'translate' it, so that I was actually able to enjoy the music that was hidden behind the hiss and the 'distant box' effect of an acoustic recording played through a crudely designed internal horn.

The original users of these records would not, of course, have been spoilt by such wonders of modern science as re-entrant tone-chambers or horns made of old telephone directories. This aural adjustment would therefore have been all the easier for them. Admittedly, I too have some advantage over many of you, in that I possess nothing stereophonic or 'high fidelity', although my Pye Black Box has been known to give forth a very pleasant sound (it is currently emitting some rather unpleasant sounds reminiscent of the Great Raspberry Blower of Old London Town, about which I can do nothing on account of its being, horror of horrors, ELECTRIC).

There are those who clearly feel that trying to listen to old records as their original owners would have heard them is a sign of madness, but I see no reason why, given the ear's obvious ability to make allowances, we should qualify for the looney bin any more than those who spend thousands of pounds to achieve what they fondly imagine to be a realistic performance in their own home. Michael Flanders poked fun at this particular idiocy back in the 1950s ("Personally, I can't think of anything I should hate more than to have a real orchestra playing in my drawing room"). Mike Field makes the same point, incidentally, in his first Regional Roundup, in this issue. If you think about it, perfect sound reproduction can never exist, except possibly in the case of solo instrumental performances, because records are designed to be played in domestic circumstances where a sound suitable for a concert hall would be intolerable. I must admit, though, that I prefer listening to the Expert to the Library Bijou.

News has reached us of a RADIOJUMBLE to be held on February 20th at the Ghandi Hall, Fitzroy Square, London W.1 (near the Post Office Tower), beginning at 12.30. Despite its name, the inclusion on the Press Release of a picture of a mahogany Senior Monarch with its gooseneck and soundbox reversed implies that some (possibly imperfect) gramophones might be found there as well. The event is organised by Ed Lord, [REDACTED] London N.1.

# BROADCAST

## THE STORY OF A RECORD.

Part 2

In March 1931, Vocalion stopped making its Broadcast Super Twelve Dance records (with orange labels), and a new 10-inch record was introduced, also alleged with a playing duration equal to a 12-inch disc. This was labelled in scarlet and gold, named the Broadcast Super Twelve and given a catalogue series in a 3,000 block. These, as with all Broadcasts produced so far, were recorded under the Marconi system and bore the usual Minacircle symbol, although there were only eight months to go before the expiry of its exclusive licence. The new discs included dance music recordings as part of a popular and varied repertoire. The records were priced at 1s. 6d. each and, at the same time, the 8-inch Broadcasts were reduced to 1s. each. (Edison Bell had reduced their Radio records to that amount in December 1930). The new recordings were broadcast weekly from Radio Toulouse in France, the Vocalion company having bought air time. In June the Company applied to have the word REX registered as a trade mark for gramophone records, the second company to do so.

There were again no dividends for shareholders at the sixth A.G.M., although it was claimed that the demand for Broadcast records had been well maintained. Owing to the poor financial position of Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd. the parent company had resolved to reduce its claim of a royalty of £10,000 per annum to only £2,500.

In September 1931 the Broadcast record was increased in size to 9 inches, and the Co-operative Societies' discs also increased as a matter of course. The price remained at 1s. for both. New recording studios were being installed at the former Norland School for Girls building at 53, Norland Square, Holland Park. The original studios at Duncan Avenue were to be abandoned. From October 1931, Norland Square became the registered office of the Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd.

After November 1931, the three types of Broadcast record then in production began to be recorded under a "New Electrical Process", and the encircled M and Marconi process legend disappeared from the labels. The new studios were in production by December 5th 1931.

At about this time, Vocalion petitioned the courts to have Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd. compulsorily wound up. The hearing took place on January 11th 1932, and the newspapers were intimating that the parent company might soon be taken over by the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd. This was confirmed in March 1932.

### NEW PROPRIETORS

Crystalate found it necessary to increase its capitalisation by the offer of two types of shares in order to purchase Vocalion. The price was put at £64,000.

Upon acquisition, Crystalate stopped the blue-label Broadcast Twelve records.

The Vocalion Gramophone Co. Ltd. was to be voluntarily wound up by Crystalate and Percy Garrat, one of Vocalion's original directors, was appointed liquidator on April 12th. 1932. There was a proposal that a new company should be formed as Vocalion Gramophone (1932) Ltd., but in the meantime Crystalate kept the original name on the Broadcast and Broadcast Super Twelve labels which continued to come from the Hayes factory. Crystalate's own Imperial discs and the 8-inch Eclipses for Woolworth's were made at Tonbridge.

In May 1932 it was revealed that Vocalion (Foreign) Ltd's total deficiency was put at £49,195, with a shareholding deficiency of £209,286. No audited accounts had been made since June 1930 and failure of the business was ascribed to the failure of the Melbourne factory to achieve full productive capacity, to the world trade recession and the failure of the company's investments elsewhere.

Crystalate reduced the price of the Broadcast Super Twelve to 1s. 3d. each in June 1932. Brownlac Ltd. was put into voluntary liquidation in July 1932 by the liquidating Vocalion company, which itself was not wound up until April 1936.

By October 1932, the Hayes address was being omitted from the Broadcast Super Twelve labels, with Crystalate's City Road address in lieu but still under the Vocalion name.

#### BROADCAST INTERNATIONAL AND BROADCAST FOUR-TUNE.

In January 1933, Crystalate introduced two new types of Broadcast record. Of these, the Broadcast International had both scarlet and gold and black and gold labels, and was so called as the repertoire was drawn from matrices in America and Germany, where Crystalate had interests in record companies. The Broadcast Four-Tune had a fine groove pitch enabling five to six minutes' playing time to be accommodated on each side. This was employed to record two dance music tunes per side. Both these ten-inch records sold at 1s. 6d.

The 9-inch Broadcasts had their last supplement in August 1933 and the Broadcast Super Twelves began to carry the name of the Crystalate company around the edge of the labels. In September, the Rex record was introduced at 1s., as a replacement for the Broadcast.

March 1934 saw the last supplement of the Broadcast Super Twelve records; the 'B' prefixed International series had ceased one year earlier and the Broadcast Four Tune record had stopped in December 1933. (An enigmatic series, about which little is known, was the Broadcast Super Twelve Scottish series, with 'SC' prefixes. Frank Andrews would welcome full details of any known records in this series).

Under the Crystalate name Broadcast Super Twelve labels began to carry the legend concerning fixed prices and public performance prohibition.

## IMPERIAL BROADCAST

Crystalate introduced the Imperial-Broadcast record in March 1934. This was a 10-inch record with black and gold label, a 4,000 catalogue series and a price of 1s. 6d. It survived for less than a year, along with Imperial records, leaving Crystalate with only Rex and the Eclipse records being supplied to Woolworth's.

## BROADCAST NEW SERIES

The Broadcast New Series discs were eight inches in diameter and priced at 6d. There were only twenty-eight issues, pressed mostly from Eclipse matrices, although a few of the former 8-inch Broadcast matrices were also employed. These were mentioned in "World's Fair" in August or September 1937, but may have been issued earlier. What would the trade have said about them in 1927 if they had been issued then at 6d! They appear to be the last disc with 'Broadcast' forming part of its name-style.

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## London Meeting

November 16th 1982

Ted Cunningham presented the programme for this evening, taking as his theme music he had heard at the Promenade Concerts at the Royal Albert Hall. As a youth in the late 1940s, Ted had been a keen promenader for several years, and had seen and heard many famous personalities in the music world. In several instances he managed to obtain interviews with artists, and had obtained autographs and other mementoes.

The talk was illustrated throughout with recordings made by the artists he had seen, along with anecdotes of their careers, and of the interviews he had. Among the musicians we heard on records were Archie Camden (bassoon), Solomon (piano), Margarita Grandi (soprano), Heddle Nash (tenor), Dennis Brain (horn), Sir Adrian Boult and the B. B. C. Symphony Orchestra.

Other legendary performers, some of whom have now passed on, were Percy Grainger (piano), Ida Haendel (violin), Kathleen Ferrier (contralto), William Walton and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Ted commented on the good job done by the B. B. C. in promoting concerts of good music at prices everyone could afford. At the time he was speaking of, one could get in for as little as two shillings, and if a season ticket was purchased, the cost worked out at half that! These season tickets engendered a group of regular attenders who became friends, and at one stage such a group had formed a "Prom Arts Society" to promote the appreciation of music through regular meetings out of the Prom season.

Altogether a delightful evening, and one which must have brought back happy memories of concert-going for others besides the presenter, while also providing a basis for introducing recordings of a kind not often heard at our meetings.

London Reporter.

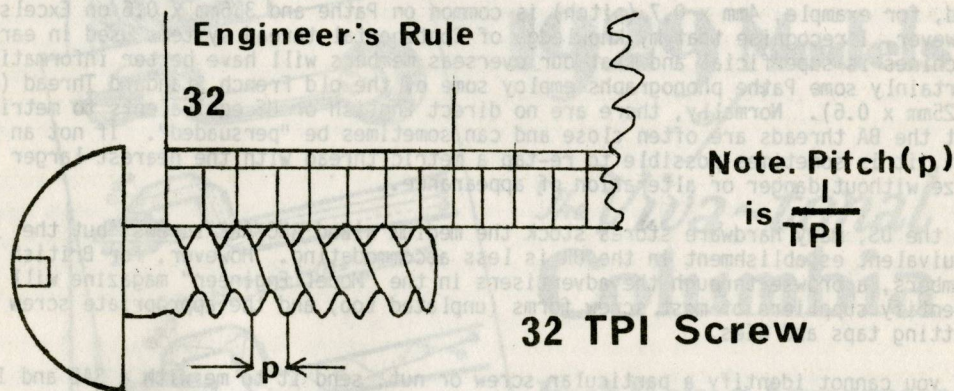
## TECHNICAL FORUM

Mike Field

A letter from an expatriate member now living in Canada on the question of screw threads on Edison machines prompts this article on missing or stripped screws. Clearly it would not be practical to attempt to list all screws used in every machine, but it may be useful to identify those commonly used by well known manufacturers.

It would not be unreasonable to suppose that manufacturers would use their national screw system and while this is broadly true of American and Continental machines, it is not so in the case of well known early British manufacturers. For example, the Gramophone Company (and its forerunner G&T) used the American thread system (except in late soundboxes) until well into the 1930s, while Decca and Edison Bell used Continental, including Swiss motors. There may be some entirely British made machines of the early 1900s using all British screws, but I doubt if they are very numerous. Garrard, which was a relatively late arrival on the scene, uses British Association (BA) screws throughout which are identified by a single number (eg No 2BA) and Collaro is another possibility.

Ideally, to identify a particular screw, a micrometer and thread gauge are required, but a good idea can be obtained by the judicious use of an engineer's steel ruler as shown in the diagram. Such rulers are usually divided into 20ths, 24ths, 32nds, and 64ths and, of course, millimetres. Thus, with care and a magnifying glass, most of the common threads can be identified. Of course, if you have the correct tap, or any tap with the correct number of threads per inch, positive identification can be obtained by putting tap and screw side by side so that the threads interleave.



Edison, Columbia and Gramophone Company machines all use American National Coarse or Fine threads, in which system the smaller sizes are identified by a number (mostly even) followed by a multiplication sign, dash or dot and ending in another number. The first identifies the thread outside diameter and the second the number of threads per inch. Hence 6 x 32 is 0.138 inches in diameter and has 32 threads per inch. The range of the first number is from 0 to 14 after which the diameter is specified in fractions of an inch.

Some years ago, there was an attempt to rationalise all the multifarious thread forms and a new system was introduced. Known as the Unified system, the UNC/UNF series can be used directly in place of many ANC/ANF (and BSW screws). Happily it follows the same identification system and a 6 x 32 UNC screw is more or less identical with a 6 x32 ANC. The very common 5 x 40 screw does not have a UNC/UNF equivalent, but a 1/8 BSW will fit; there is no equivalent for the 1.72 and 3.48 sizes.

TYPE	THREAD DIA*	EXAMPLES OF USE
1 x 72	0.073"	Edison governor spring fixing screws
2 x 64	0.086"	Edison reproducer clamp screws on early machines
3 x 48	0.099"	HMV 102 portable
5 x 40	0.125"	Numerous fixing screws on Edison and Columbia machines
6 x 32	0.138"	Motor assembly screws on Edison and Columbia machines
8 x 32	0.164"	Motor attachment screws on Edison and Columbia machines
10 x 24	0.190"	Edison GEM baseboard screws
12 x 24	0.216"	Edison GEM winding handle.
14 x 24	0.242"	Graphophone Q winding key (some might be 1/4 x 20)
5/16 x 18	0.3125"	Edison and Columbia phonograph winding handles

\* New screws; well-used ones will be slightly smaller

Modern metric threads can be generalised into fine or coarse (ISO) but this system is relatively modern. Before the introduction of the ISO system, metric threads were in a slightly different range and such will be found on Pathe, Excelsior and many less well known Continental machines. Metric threads are specified by diameter and pitch and, for example, 4mm x 0.7 (pitch) is common on Pathe and 3.5mm x 0.6 on Excelsior. However, I recognise that my knowledge of Continental thread systems used in early machines is superficial and that our overseas members will have better information. Certainly some Pathe phonographs employ some of the old French Standard Thread (eg 3.25mm x 0.6). Normally, there are no direct English or US equivalents to metric, but the BA threads are often close and can sometimes be "persuaded". If not an exact fit, it is sometimes possible to re-tap a metric thread with the nearest larger BA size without danger or alteration of appearance.

In the US, many hardware stores stock the medium sized ANC/ANF screws, but the equivalent establishment in the UK is less accommodating. However, for British members, a browse through the advertisers in the "Model Engineer" magazine will identify suppliers of most screw forms (unplated too) and the appropriate screw cutting taps and dies.

If you cannot identify a particular screw or nut, send it to me with a SAE and I will attempt to do so. It's even possible I might have a spare!

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The advertisement on the opposite page appeared in October 1928. It would be interesting to know from any acoustic scientists among the members, whether there could possibly be anything in the principle of 'straight line amplification' here so graphically explained to an innocent public.

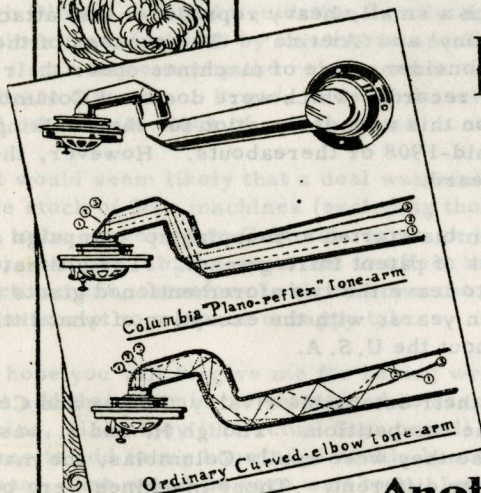


# All the World Will be Asking — What is **STRAIGHT LINE** **AMPLIFICATION?**



The Answer will be  
found in the New  
**PLANO-REFLEX PRINCIPLES**  
incorporated in the

**1929 Models**  
*of*  
*The Viva-tonal*  
**Columbia**



Just Being Announced  
Another Important Advance  
in **COLUMBIA Progress!**

## FALLEN STAR

---

I was most interested to see the advertisement for the Star talking machine as sold by Edison Bell, reprinted in Hillandale No. 129. I am answering the call for 'Stateside' information, which I feel qualified to do as my current studies have embraced this very area.

The story of how the 'Star' machines came to be sold abroad is a somewhat sad one, at least if one roots for the underdog. As you say, they were distributed in the States by Hawthorne and Sheble (of Philadelphia, though they did, as we shall see, have a connection with Chicago). As far as I have been able to determine, the Hawthorne and Sheble Manufacturing Co. was responsible for the actual fabrication, and actually 'jobbed' for other companies, not vice versa. Hawthorne and Sheble had a venerable history in both the realm of records and of talking machine accessories, by the time they came to begin the production of their own disc instruments. They had enjoyed apparent success and seemed to be working to some extent under the aegis of Columbia. The fact that they were listed year after year on Edison's 'blackballed' slate was an indication of their determination to retain the autonomy of choice which he demanded of his dealers to surrender.

They seemed to be making a 'go' of it, playing the field, and began supplying various companies in Chicago (such as the O'Neill-James Co.) with disc talking machines of cheap construction, around 1907. These unusual machines, with their elongated morning glory horns to which a small, heavy reproducer was attached, are commonly seen as 'Busy Bee', 'Harmony' and 'Aretino'. The success of these instruments apparently prompted them to consider a line of machines under their own mark. Since they were selling 'Star' records, which were doctored Columbia matrices, H. and S. naturally hit upon this as a designation for their talking machines. This must have been in mid-1908 or thereabouts. However, the rumblings of disaster were already to be heard.

At this same time Victor and Columbia started a 'mopping up' campaign against the smaller companies, on the grounds of patent infringement. The ultimate success of these ventures into the courts was to leave the two aforementioned giants in complete control of the disc market for ten years, with the exception of what little effect vertical cut discs would have, throughout the U. S. A.

It seems quite clear that, despite their ostensible rivalry, Victor and Columbia were working collusively to destroy the competition. Though H. and S. was rightfully licensed to sell Star discs because they were really Columbias, the matter of the Star talking machines was altogether different. These machines were being produced in great quantities and shipped to Chicago to be sold as Aretinos, Yankee Princes, D and Rs and other promotional brands. The version sold by these companies, like the preceding model, was of extremely cheap construction.

The model which Hawthorne and Sheble sold under its own name was considerably better appointed, like the one pictured in the advert. In order to avoid the inevitable,

both these types of Star were made with a funny clap-trap in the tone-arm which was supposed to be a mechanical feed device. It was not, and when it came to the courts, "expert" witnesses for the prosecution ridiculed this attempt to circumvent the basic Berliner patent. These court documents show that 1909 was a very bad year for a number of individuals occupying the periphery of the talking machine business. Victor took it upon itself to do away with the Chicago companies, or else force them to buy from Columbia, which was losing considerable revenue due to H. and S. One hates to point the finger, but Columbia most certainly gave their consent to the prosecution of these Chicago firms because they knew that they must needs be the only source of supply. Victor could not be accused of this because it was not interested in the promotional market.

It was during 1909 that Chicago talking machine pioneer Arthur J. O'Neill and his associates were shamelessly tricked into putting their very necks in the noose, by surrendering Hawthorne and Sheble machines to an agent of the Victor Talking Machine Company on the pretext that Victor would consider supplying a similar machine at lower cost through their affiliate, Zonophone. To my knowledge, this is the first time that this information has been revealed. Needless to say, the machines were used to induce an injunction against the sale of the hapless O'Neill's entire inventory, and when he and his partners rushed East to beg for mercy from none other than Eldridge Johnson himself, they were rebuffed.

On the way back from Camden, they stopped in Bridgeport to see Columbia. Thus the circle was complete. In the words of Caesar, the die was cast, and although O'Neill escaped liquidation by allying himself with Columbia, all the talking machines manufactured by Hawthorne and Sheble were enjoined from being sold. Thus it can be seen why the references in the Edison Bell ad. suggest some sort of corporate disaster. It was, in fact, disastrous to Hawthorne and Sheble, which could not sell its stock of merchandise.

It would seem likely that a deal was made with Victor and Columbia whereby the entire stock of Star machines (excluding those made up for the Chicago trade, which were to be converted to Columbia parts or junked) would be sold or, more appropriately, 'dumped' abroad so as not to affect the American market. The Edison Bell advertisement, therefore (which I am most grateful to you for reprinting) gives us the postscript to a rather unhappy tale.

I hope you will forgive me for having written at such length on this subject. I might add that I would be interested in hearing from anyone who might have a Star machine, since they (the actual Star brand) are not often seen in the U.S. I am anxious to add to my knowledge of this brand and, of course, if someone had one for disposal, that would be very well too. I may be reached at the Lift Bridge Book Shop, [REDACTED] Fairport, N. Y. 14450, U.S.A.

Timothy C. Fabrizio

No need to apologize: this is just the sort of information we welcome. I must apologize, though, for my silly mistake in shifting H. and S. to Chicago

-Ed.

# Decca Records 1929-1980

## PART ONE: EARLY DAYS

M. J. Lambert

This article covers the history of the Decca Record Co., from its inception in 1929, through to its demise as an independent record manufacturer in 1980, when it was sold to Polygram.

A major source of information for the earlier part of this article has been a book published in 1956 called 'No C.I.C.' (Capital Issues Committee). It was written by Edward Lewis (later Sir Edward), who founded the record company in 1929. In this book, he presented an argument in favour of the entrepreneurial approach to launching and running companies, rather than the formalised style permitted by various Government agencies. Although not necessarily expressing an impartial view, Lewis gives a vivid insight to the pressures Decca was subjected to during its formative years.

The latter part of this article has been drawn from experience gained by the author, who joined Decca in 1974.

\* \* \* \* \*

Edward Lewis was a stockbroker, and son of a banker. He was, to all intents and purposes, the founder of the Decca Record Co., although in the early years he remained an adviser, and was not part of the actual management team.

In the summer of 1928, the Barnett Samuel gramophone business was in the process of being floated as a public company. Lewis takes up the sequence of events....

*I was impressed by the excellent profit of the Samuel business and what then appeared to be its good prospects. Before the end of September my firm acted as brokers to the offer for sale by Adamant Investment Corporation of 370,000 shares of 10s each at 24s 9d in the Decca Gramophone Co, the name having been changed from Barnett Samuel.*

Lewis acted as a consultant in the formation of the new Board of Directors. He observed that some of the record companies launched during that period lasted but a few years, or even months.

*Towards the end of 1928, at least one company, The Duophone Company, was known to be running into difficulties; it could, in fact, hardly be said that it had got itself onto a firm commercial footing. Its factory, the former Rapson Tyre Works, at Shannon Corner on the Kingston bypass, covering 75000 sq.ft., was operating at only partial capacity, chiefly in the manufacture of Al Jolson records, then in great demand. It occurred to me that there might be a chance of the Decca company picking up the factory on a going concern basis and virtually overnight entering the record industry, which has always seemed the profitable end of the gramophone business.*

*With the well-known Decca trademark and a distributing organisation covering not only Great Britain but most parts of the world, it seemed that a*

Decca record would surely succeed where others were failing. I put the idea to the directors, who went so far as to inspect the plant. I remember Avidon's (the Works Director) story about how, when they went from one department to another, he kept seeing the same faces. Apparently, to impress the visitors with the size of the organisation, various employees were quickly shifted from one section to another. Anyway, the stunt was of no avail, for the Decca directors turned down the proposals. I decided to go ahead on my own.

I decided to form a syndicate to buy the factory with a view to the flotation of a new record company. The next day the Malden Holding Company Ltd., with a paid-up capital of two pounds, was registered. A few days later, the Duophone directors.....agreed to the sale of the building and plant for £145,000.

The next immediate problem was to find a name for the company, and it had to be a household word. After listening to various suggestions, we came to the conclusion that only the name "Decca" would do, and that if we purchased the Decca Gramophone business we would secure the all-important sales organisation. Decca Gramophone was initially against the proposed take-over, but a shares issue was arranged by the Malden Holding Co. to finance an attractive offer, which was ultimately accepted by 95% of the share-holders.

The company started with over £300,000 in cash and I remember Sir Sigismund Mendl (a financial adviser) suggesting that a large portion of this sum should be put on deposit with the National Discount Co., where a good rate of interest could be obtained. I told him that regardless of the rate of interest, the money should be deposited with the Company's bankers, the National Provincial, to whom the board could turn if ever they needed help.

I little guessed how desperately that assistance would one day be needed, or that I should be the one who would have to ask for it. I made up my mind long before never to be mixed up in commerce.

The company's loyalty to their bankers was still evident in 1978; the corner site of the Decca HQ on the Albert Embankment was let to a National Westminster branch.

Lewis found after 3 months that all was not well with the new company, now the Decca Record Co.. Unable to persuade the management directly, he suggested the formation of a committee to evaluate the position. A board re-organisation was ultimately effected, with the Record Co. being placed under the management of the gramophone company.

\* \* \* \* \*

Decca has always had the reputation for pioneering cheap records. Lewis advocated this course in 1931.

In the early months of 1931 I did my utmost to persuade the directors to reduce the price of the popular records from 2s. to 1s. 6d., in the belief that only at the lower price could the turnover be increased sufficiently to enable the company to earn profits. At that time, HMV and Columbia were retailing at 3s., their second string records, Zonophone and Regal, at 2s.6d., with Broadcast, Imperial and others at 1s.6d. I argued that a record at 1s.6d. with a Decca mark would not only eat into the turnover of higher priced records but

# *The* **NOW DECCA**

OLGA OLGINA



ROY HENDERSON

Decca Records are here! Supreme records, electrically recorded. Supreme artists, masterfully reproduced. Go to your local Decca Stockist to-day and hear some of the new and exclusive Decca delights.

*New Electrical Recordings*

THE DECCA  
MALDEN

# READY RECORD

DALE SMITH



On the Decca lists you will find works worthy of permanent record and performers destined to live for all time. Also some of the finest modern dance records. Keep in touch with the growing Decca catalogue of first-class records.

*New Electrical Recordings*

RECORD CO., LTD.  
SURREY

## OLGA OLGINA

(with orchestral accompaniment)

12-inch Double-sided Records, Black Label, 6/6

S 10002 The Bell Song (Lakme) 1st and 2nd Record

*Delibes*

This is the gramophone romance of Olga Olgina.

## DALE SMITH (Baritone)

(with orchestral accompaniment)

10-inch Double-sided Record, Magenta Label, 3/-

M 35 The Vagabond (from "Songs of Travel") ... *Vaughan-Williams*

(a) Bright is the Ring of Words (from "Songs of Travel") ... *Vaughan-Williams*

(b) The Roadside Fire ("Songs of Travel") ... *Vaughan-Williams*

Three lovely songs of Vaughan-Williams which show the supreme artistry of Dale Smith, one of the most important of our younger singers.

## ROY HENDERSON

with the New English Symphony Orchestra and Choir

12-inch Double-sided Records, Black Label, 6/6 each

SEA DRIFT ... *Delius*

S 10010 1st and 2nd Record

S 10011 3rd and 4th Record

S 10012 5th and 6th Record

The issue of these records is of very special interest in view of the forthcoming Delius Festival.

## AMBROSE and HIS ORCHESTRA

(At The Mayfair Hotel)

10-inch Double-sided Records, Magenta Label, 3/- each

M 31 \*Mean to Me (Fox Trot) ... *Turk-Ahert*

Do Something (Fox Trot) ... *Green-Sieps*

M 32 \*Don't Hold Everything (from "Hold Everything") (Fox Trot)

*De Sylva-Brown-Henderson*

\*You're the Cream in My Coffee (from "Hold Everything")

(Fox Trot) ... *De Sylva-Brown-Henderson*

M 33 Sugar is Back (Fox Trot) ... *Springer*

\*A Precious Little Thing Called Love (Fox Trot) ... *Davis-Coots*

M 37 The Wedding of the Painted Doll (Fox Trot) ... *Brown*

\*Walking with Susie (Fox Trot)

*Gottler-Conrad-Mitchell*

\*With Vocal Refrain.

These will be in enormous demand, not only for dancing, but for those who appreciate and enjoy hearing dance records played by an orchestra of which each individual member is a master artist.

would surely take a great deal of business away from the lower priced ones. (Directors) England and Newton argued that a drop in gross profit per record would be disastrous. I stuck to my guns and finally they offered to agree to a reduction to 1s.9d. ....By a stroke of good fortune, before any move had been made, there came an announcement of major importance - the Gramophone Company and The Columbia Graphophone Company were amalgamating. I realised that this move gave Decca its opportunity; that competition with a combine would be very different from competition with two active independent companies, either one of which might at any time have been forced to cut prices in the then rapidly deteriorating state of world trade. I immediately pressed my point for a reduction in price to 1s.6d., and at the very last moment got my way.

Some behind-the-scenes dealings were conducted by Lewis prior to the AGM in 1931. He attempted to unseat the current Managing Director, Newton, but on returning from a holiday in Switzerland found that his plans had been thwarted. Again, Lewis took matters into his own hands; he had decided to get elected to the board, and personally involved with the running of the company. This was effected by Sept. 1931. The author is not sure how this came about, and Lewis did not document how it was achieved; he merely states that he took over

*...Newton's tiny office, his secretary Mrs Hewsley, and the firm's old Dodge!*

Late 1931 saw Decca making headway.....

Decca records were now building up a new importance and the anticipated reduction in price of Regal-Zonophone to 1s. 6d. took place, with HMV and Columbia dropping to 2s.6d. But by then Decca was established, if precariously. In November we had our first real coup in the signing up of an exclusive contract with Jack Hylton. We paid a high price, including the allotment of 40,000 Ordinary shares, but the stimulus was immediately apparent for one of the very first Hylton records was Rhymes, sales of which exceeded 300,000 copies, a total for one record not again to be reached for some 13 years....We signed a contract with the Polyphonwerke Company, for the rights to the famous Polydor recordings. We were mainly interested in their classical recordings, a field in which the Decca Co. was weak by comparison with the competitors. Although the deal gave Decca added prestige and some additional volume, the sales never justified our early optimism. The "Dog and Trumpet" was still all-powerful in this field.

This remained true until the mid 1960's and the advent of Hi-Fi - Decca was always strong on pop produce whereas the situation at EMI was the reverse.

\* \* \* \* \*

Although it had only been recently formed, and was in the throes of sorting out its own internal finances, Decca was soon on the take-over trail.

Joe Bishop of the Brunswick Radio Corp. came in one day and asked if we were interested in buying the (UK) Brunswick business. The answer was, of course, "Yes"....We signed an agreement for the purchase of the business for some £15,000. During all the negotiations, I was on tenterhooks lest Louis Sterling (EMI) or Darryl Warnford-Davis (Crystallite) should compete for the business. However, all was well except that we did not have £15,000, for by then

we had an overdraft at the National Provincial of some £50,000. I went to see H G Whitehurst, a general manager of the bank, and asked him to allow us to increase the overdraft to provide for the purchase. Whitehurst lent us the money and I breathed again. That Brunswick deal, though of great significance, strained still further our already tight finances and from then on for some five years, we had a day-to-day struggle to keep the business afloat.

Despite our troubles, which couldn't help be known, we were extended generous credit by suppliers. Amongst many both Standard Telephones and Mullards, who supplied the Decca Gramophone Co with valves, helped to keep the business afloat.

We never ran away, answering 'phone calls and letters, even though we were unable to settle our accounts on time. Our own confidence in the final outcome was unshakeable. One day the 'phones were cut off, for the Post Office is not long-suffering. Every possible economy was made. The German branch, which was operating at a loss, had been closed down. The French branch was taken over by Edison Bell. Salary cuts were accepted by the loyal and enthusiastic staff at Decca.

In the City and elsewhere, possibilities of success were regarded as nil. Darryl Wardford-Davis proposed a deal under which Crystallate would take over the business. It was promptly turned down, but reports came back that it was considered at Crystallate just a matter of time - a short time - before Decca would fall into their lap. Louis Sterling is said to have remarked that Decca was such an unconscionable time in dying that by the time the end came EMI themselves would be so weak they'd probably fall into the same grave.

A significant amount of Decca output was originally produced by US Brunswick.....

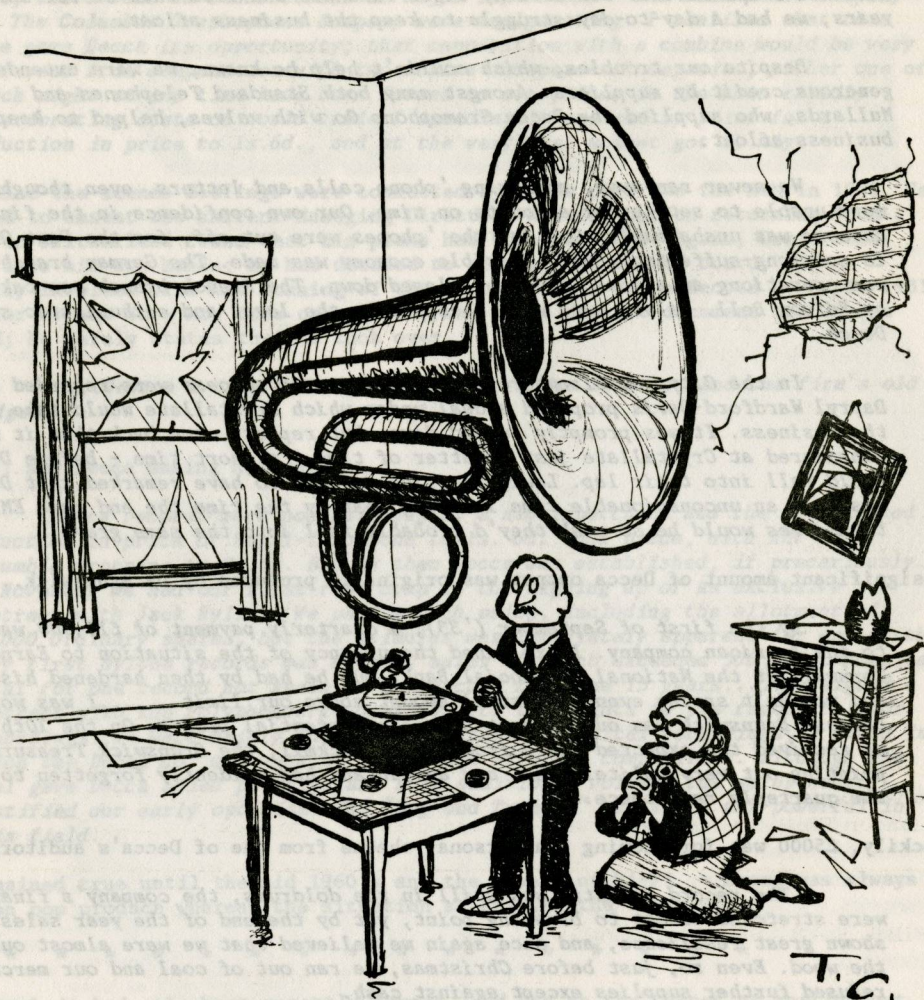
By the first of September ('33), a quarterly payment of £10,000 was due to the American company. I explained the urgency of the situation to Earnest Cornwall at the National Provincial Bank, but he had by then hardened his heart and wouldn't spring even that small amount above our limit.....I was worried, because Brunswick was our biggest source of potential profit. On the 10th Sept., we received the expected cable from Milton Rackmil, the Brunswick Treasurer, pointing out very politely that our accountant had evidently forgotten to send the quarterly remittance.

Luckily, £5000 was forthcoming - a personal cheque from one of Decca's auditors!

The record industry was still in the doldrums, the company's finances were stretched almost to breaking point, yet by the end of the year sales had shown great resilience, and once again we believed that we were almost out of the wood. Even so, just before Christmas, we ran out of coal and our merchant refused further supplies except against cash.

At this point, Decca nearly went under. National Provincial manager Earnest Cornwall advised Lewis at a dinner party that they had decided to put the Decca business into the hands of their breaking-up department. Lewis negotiated 3 weeks' grace. Two days before that period expired, £60,000 worth of finance was received from the Drayton group of Trust Companies.

(To be concluded)



PLEASE, SON ! NOT THE WAGNER !

## Edith Coates

It is a sad fact, if inevitable, that an interest like ours means a pre-occupation with those who have died, either as the inventors or developers of machines or systems, or, more often, with the performers who appear on many a cherished cylinder or disc. Recently we heard of the death of Artur Rubinstein, and sadly we must now add to our obituary columns the name of the opera singer Edith Coates, who died of pneumonia in a Worthing hospital in the first week of the New Year.

Miss Coates, who was a mezzo-soprano, was 74, having been born in Lincoln in 1908. She studied singing in London before beginning her professional career in 1924 as a member of the Vic-Wells Opera Company (which later became the Sadlers Wells Opera Company in 1931).

After her Covent Garden debut in 1937 she became a founder member of the New Covent Garden Opera Company and appeared in the title role of *Carmin* in January 1947 - the first full-scale opera production at Covent Garden after the War. Edith Coates also sang leading roles in *Peter Grimes* as well as *Arthur Bliss' The Olympians* and *Britten's Gloriana*.

Although Miss Coates' last appearance was about ten years ago she was awarded an OBE in 1977 for her services to music. She is survived by her husband Powell Lloyd, the tenor and opera producer. They married in 1933.

Edith Coates was not one of the prolific recording artistes of the opera world in Britain, possibly because the intervention of the 1939-45 World War disrupted her career, and that of many of her contemporaries. However, she made several recordings for HMV. One popular disc which members may turn up from time to time is HMV C3086, in which she is joined by Noel Eadie, Webster Booth and Arnold Matters, in the English-language version of the *Rigoletto* Quartette, entitled *Fairest Daughter of the Graces*. The record would appear to have been issued at around the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939. The London Philharmonic Orchestra is conducted by Warwick Braithwaite.

Colin Johnson.

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## FIBRES AND SURFACE NOISE AGAIN

I have read Ian Cosens' article on Surface Noise (December issue), in which he advances the claim that the best signal-to-noise ratio in record replay is achieved by using thorn or fibre needles. Does he not, by using such needles, lose not only some surface noise but also some of the recorded signal?

Tests show that with a freshly sharpened thorn or fibre, only at the beginning of a record side is such a needle capable of tracing a wave form in a groove up to a frequency of 5KHz with any degree of accuracy. Certainly, a thorn or fibre will give a signal of some sort up to the 14 KHz Ian Cosens claims, but only with a con-

siderable and increasing degree of distortion.

Of fibres and thorns Gilbert Briggs (in his standard work 'Sound Reproduction') says "About half-way through a record the fibre begins to look like a blunt instrument, and to expect this to trace the modulated groove is on a par with trying to fill in a crossword puzzle with a poker." The effect of such a 'blunt instrument' in record grooves is such as to leave a fibre deposit further occluding the signal in the groove. Only by clearing out grooves so affected and using a suitable sapphire or diamond stylus can the full frequency range in the grooves be realised.

Should acoustic buffs react to all this by suggesting that a 'blunt instrument' is more than capable of extracting the frequency range in acoustic recordings, recent experiments have shown that frequencies certainly up to 5KHz are there to be extracted - but not with a thorn or fibre.

Joe Pengelly

The fibre-versus-steel and fibre-versus-jewel arguments have been going on for many years and seem doomed to continue for ever. Can we not accept that some people like acoustic gramophones with fibre needles, some like them with steel, some like electric machines with thorns and some like them with sapphires or diamonds, and leave it at that? Speaking for myself, I wouldn't know a KHz from a Hippopotamus' left molar, but I know what I like, and no amount of arguments in these or any other pages are going to make me like anything else - Ed.

P.S. Anyone who writes in to say that Hippopotami don't have molars will be duly dealt with.....

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## BOOK REVIEWS

BILLY WILLIAMS'S RECORDS — A Study in Discography by Frank Andrews and Ernie Bayly.

Published by TALKING MACHINE REVIEW and obtainable through the Society's book-list.

72pp., with photographs and line illustrations.

Any record collector of even brief experience will recognise the name of Billy Williams, having come across his performances on almost every conceivable label, the same matrix number often being used on different makes. It was this curiosity that challenged Ernie Bayly to make a start when it has sometimes been put about that "Nobody will ever manage to sort out Billy Williams." He teamed up with Frank Andrews, another researcher in difficult areas, and these two experts have produced a really worthwhile discography, endowed with plenty of interest, about a man who died nearly 70 years ago, but whose songs and chirpy laugh are still familiar through the gramophone.

Williams landed in Britain from Sydney in 1899 and, with Florrie Forde and later Albert Whelan, was one of the three great stars from the southern hemisphere, yet his life was quite short and he died young in March 1915, probably though overwork and living to the full. After arriving in London he became assistant manager of the Marylebone Music Hall in 1901, but could not resist performing and seeking publicity by driving about London in an open carriage wearing his Velvet Suit and 'Bubbles' hair style. At the end of 1906 he contracted for three years to make cylinders for the British Edison Company at 50 shillings a song. It was not long before he realised that this contract applied only to cylinders, so he launched himself in the next year with the disc companies right up to the time of his death. So popular were his catchy and genial songs that records continued to be issued and re-issued posthumously. The last was in 1933, a privilege then granted only to great singers.

Andrews and Bayly have done a tremendous amount of research, spread over twenty years, and this has involved far-off friends from the Antipodes and America, and contact with Billy Williams' widow. Their chronological presentation of the songs, with the record companies that put them out, is really very good, and includes some useful contemporary publicity material. Although the book might be described as of 72 pages, there is extra material at either end, including at the Introduction many photographs and samples of some of his record labels, while at the back are items reproduced from advertising sheets to complement the subject and tickle the reader.

This book is the definitive discography of Billy Williams, and its compilers are warmly commended for the painstaking quality of their researches.

**IOLANTHE** - A commemorative booklet for the centenary of the first production, November 25th 1882. Published by the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society, [redacted] Saffron Walden, Essex CB11 3HU, England. 43pp., coloured cover. £2 post paid.

This booklet contains two detailed surveys of concern to early record collectors, under the heading Iolanthe and the Gramophone - A) Historical Survey, B) Critical Assessment of D'Oyly Carte Recordings. The knowledge and able analysis of Michael Walters may be detected behind these essays, and although the emphasis is on Iolanthe recordings, some of the history of records by the early Savoyards is recounted, from 1898. There are opinions on the merits or otherwise of the various performers, and comparisons made between the 78 and later l.p. sets. Surprisingly, no mention was made of the recording of Sullivan himself on a cylinder in October 1888.

The cover is a facsimile of the first programme for Iolanthe, and gives prominence to the electric light. The Savoy was the first theatre in London with electric illumination, and the fairy chorus of Iolanthe had electric lamps in their hair. The original cast list is also given in facsimile.

It is a pity that in producing this very worthwhile booklet more care was not taken to eradicate typing errors, which at times distract from its undoubted informative content.

G. L. F.

## REGIONAL ROUNDUP

Mike Field

In a healthy growing tree, the mature trunk supplies the sap of life to the younger growths. In the Society, while our London trunk can claim over 60 glorious years since its germination in a Fleet Street pub, some of its younger branches can demonstrate quite a few annual growth rings. The Midland branch celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in January and the Hereford branch will attain the same age later this year. Other branches might only claim twig status as yet, but are demonstrably vigorous and healthy.

One of the newer growths is the East Fife branch which held its November meeting at Chris Hamilton's house, giving members the opportunity to compare the performance of some of the 100 machines in his large collection, including re-entrant horn models and a EM Ginn "Expert". According to reports, early Berliner discs played on the latter machine were particularly appreciated. Jim Goodall, rapidly gaining a reputation as a sound box "tuner" brought along one of his doctored No 4 sound boxes, which was found to give quite an impressive performance on the "Expert". The December meeting was held at the home of Peter Adamson, who gave a particularly interesting talk on electrical reproduction of "78s" and demonstrated FRED. FRED is the acronym for his pair of Full Range Electrostatic Doublet loudspeakers designed by Peter Walker of Quad. (See Hillandale News, April 1982). According to those present, the speakers had an outstandingly even frequency response, giving a realistic natural sound. It's not often that the opportunity arises to listen to a One Thousand Pound speaker system - it must have been quite an experience!

In the Hereford area, there have been two meetings, both at Laurie Wilson's home. Coincidentally, members were also given an opportunity to compare the performance of an EMG and a HMV 163 re-entrant machine. Comparisons can be odious and in this case provoked a vigorous argument. One faction held that the sound of the 163 playing pre-war dance music was particularly pleasing, while others with higher (?) musical tastes supported the EMG. The crux lies in the answer to the question: can you define "natural" sound without specifying the environment? If one could conjure up Caruso to sing an aria in the living room, it would be a traumatic experience - certainly too loud, possibly unpleasant! Fidelity can be defined scientifically but only assessed subjectively, so in the limit "we knows wot we likes" is the personal criterion.

Although a fanatic, I claim to retain a little objectivity and it often surprises me that the general public shows such considerable, if passing, interest in the machinery of gramophones and phonographs. The Midlands Branch plan to capitalize on that interest by mounting an exhibition at the Birmingham and Midland Institute in July this year. Judging by the standard of previous efforts, this latest venture will be well worth the undoubted hard work required. Preliminary arrangements were discussed at their November meeting but the main event of the evening was due to Gerry Burton, who chose the year 1931 on which to focus. 1931 happens to be the year of his birth and he outlined some other important events such as the death of Edison, Melba and Buddy Bolden. (Think about it). Britain was still affected by a world depression and the same year saw the amalgamation of the HMV and Columbia companies into the vast EMI organisation. Gerry produced a well prepared programme illustrated with records from artists such as Bessie Smith, George Robey, Will Hay, Eddie Peabody and the ubiquitous Al Bowlly, all of whom were performing at that time. Choosing a particular year as a focal point seems an excellent idea other branches may care to adopt, giving an opportunity to conduct a little research, impart knowledge and, at the same time, provide entertainment.

## THE OLDEST PERSON TO RECORD?

Perhaps I may be allowed to add to George Frow's observations in *People, Paper and Things* in the December issue. I believe I may be the member to whom he refers in discussing the oldest (earliest-born) person to have been recorded. I have since carried out some very superficial research and the subject is full of pitfalls!

First one has to consider whether we have evidence that people actually made recordings, i.e. documentary evidence in the form of letters, contracts etc., or conclusive evidence in the shape of surviving recordings themselves. Then one has to decide (as Professor Joad would have observed) exactly what you mean by a recording. If you restrict the field only to commercial recordings which were generally available to the public, that likewise restricts the scope for study.

Since talking to the President, I have had reason to revise (with reservations) my view that Lord Tennyson (born August 1809) and W. E. Gladstone (December 1809) were the earliest recorders, at the hands of the redoubtable Colonel Gouraud. I have been reminded that in 1888 Gouraud also recorded the voice of Robert Browning (born 1812) and, more importantly, the voice of Cardinal Manning was captured. Unfortunately my reference books differ on the all-important matter of the date of His Eminence's birth. My usually reliable encyclopaedia gives 1808 (oh joy!) but the latest edition of the Concise Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church gives 1809 (oh bother!) However, even if 1809 turns out to be correct, it hinges on the month.

Thus unless someone can come up with an even older contender we seem stuck in the first decade of the nineteenth century with the contest between Tennyson and Manning. But of course neither of those two eminent people recorded commercially. To find the earliest commercial recording artists, I have been able to work back only to the 1830s.

As far as singers were concerned, I would have plumped for the venerable English baritone Sir Charles Santley (born 1834, died 1922), who was one of the Gramophone Company's early 'stars', in the 1900s. He was incidentally tutor to Peter Dawson after the latter's arrival in Britain from Australia at the beginning of the century. The earliest-born instrumentalist seems (at the moment at least) to be the Hungarian-born violinist Josef Joachim, born in 1831 and whose recordings appear on highly-prized early G and Ts.

But beating both Santley and Joachim is the French baritone Jean Baptiste Faure, who was born in 1830 and was obviously still going strong and recording for Pathé around 1904. That is the limit of my research so far, duly gathered 'at an intellectual gathering around the Christmas tree'. My reference books are far from exhaustive, so perhaps other members may be able to work back to the magical 1790s.

As a postscript, a recent death at 95 must have robbed us of one of the last musicians to have made a debut in the last century: that musician of course was Artur Schnabel, and I believe he made his first appearance in 1897.

Colin Johnson.

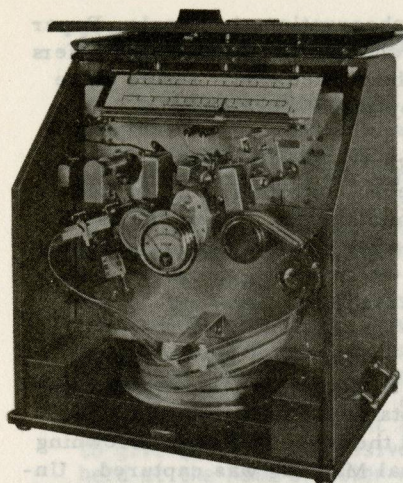
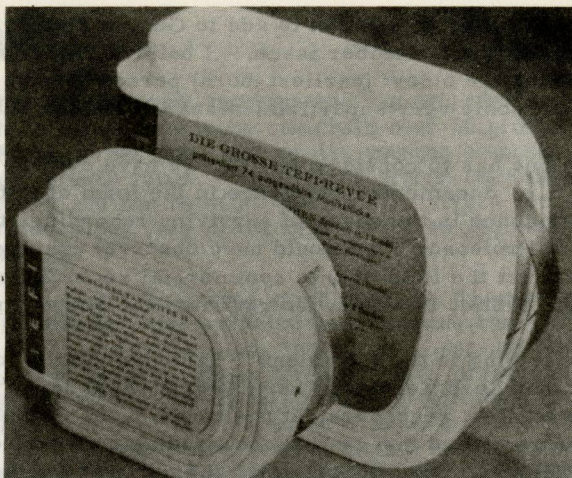
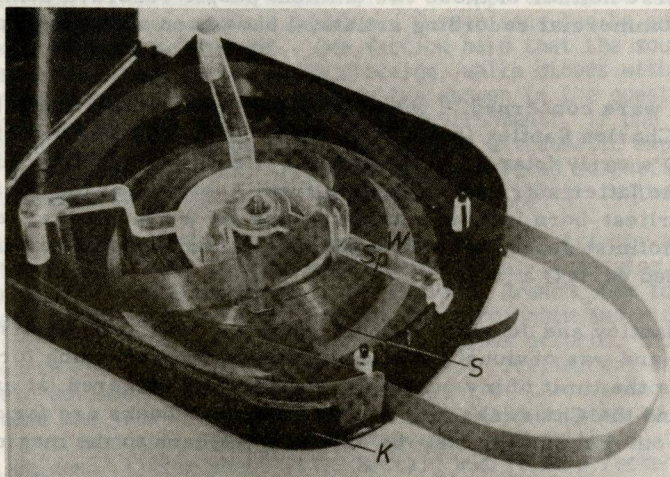


Abbildung I  
veranschaulicht die INNENANSICHT  
des Tefiphons



Left: Pre-War Tefiphon (note different spelling)  
Above: The two sizes of post-war cassette  
Below: One of the cassettes opened



# Tefifon

By Peter Czada (Berlin) and Frans Jansen (The Hague)

In Germany it is still possible, although increasingly rare, to find in flea markets small, almost rectangular tape cartridges and the machines to play them. These players are the size of a small suitcase or are built into 1950s radio sets, and carry the name TEFIFON.

Perhaps these escape the attention of the collector of real 'old' gramophones and records, because the Tefifon does not look like the familiar treasures, but resembles some kind of tape recorder. However, the Tefifon undoubtedly belongs to the same family as the brainchildren of Edison and Berliner, for its sound is embedded in a groove in an endless band of film. This is played with a sapphire needle and a crystal pick-up. The name is derived from Tele-Film-Fonograph.

The plastic cartridges are in two sizes ( $4\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{3}{4} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$  in. and  $6\frac{1}{4} \times 5\frac{3}{8} \times 1\frac{7}{8}$  in.) and are dark brown, cream or grey in colour; the tape inside is creamy white or translucent red, and  $5/8$  in. diameter. The cartridge should not be opened out of curiosity, for it is difficult to close again because of the complicated way in which the tape is wound. It is wound at the outside of the spool and taken from the inside of the loosely coiled tape (the same system as is used in 8 track stereo cartridges).

The tape in the dark brown cartridges introduced in 1950 ran at a higher speed than the later cream and grey cartridges, which played at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  i. p. s. The playing time of the light coloured cartridges varies with the size. The tall ones contained sufficient tape for up to four hours of uninterrupted music, while the smaller ones ran for about an hour - easily surpassing the playing time of long playing disc records. In the literature mention is made of recordings of 12 hours with spoken text (books for the blind).

Although the Tefifon was marketed from 1950, its history goes back into the 1920s. About 1926 the inventor Dr. Karl Daniel (1905 - 1979) of Cologne experimented with a system of sound recording on film. This would have the advantage of much longer playing time over disc records. By 1930 the first recording and reproducing device was developed, but the world economic crisis prevented mass production. It was not until 1936 that a breakthrough was announced (at the German radio show) which resulted in the formation of a company, Tefi-Apparatebau Dr Daniel KG in Cologne. This company acquired the shares of the Tri-Ergon AG, a firm that controlled various patents for sound recording on discs and film.

The pre-war Tefifons looked quite different from the playing machines used in the fifties. The early ones used 35mm. film (with transport perforations at the sides like ordinary cine film), coated on both sides and joined at the ends to form a seamless band. With a recording head a lateral groove was cut that ran in an endless spiral on both sides of the film, allowing for up to 100 grooves. The film ran at  $17\frac{3}{4}$

Daniel used the mathematical figure of the 'Möbius'sche Blatt' (Möbius' leaf). (Möbius was a mathematician, 1790-1868). For a better understanding, it helps to take a strip of paper and glue the ends together, not so as to make a full circle, but with the ends put together with the left and right top sides on each other; the strip is twisted. Now a kind of figure-of-eight is formed. When pulling this 'leaf' over a round object and using a pencil as a 'cutter' on the paper, a 'groove' is made continuously running on both sides of the paper. (The Dutch graphic artist M. Escher applied this system in one of his pictures with ants).

The Tefifon could serve as a recording and reproducing machine and allowed for a continuous playing time of six hours on a film 50 metres long in 1939. The war interrupted further development and the company was destroyed. In the period of the 'Wirtschaftswunder' (German economic revival) of the 1950s, however, the inventor Dr Daniel succeeded in rebuilding his company in Porz, near Cologne.

A completely different Tefifon was now developed, which was a player only, for use with pre-recorded tapes. This was a competitor for the early l. p. discs and magnetic tape recorders. The pre-recorded tapes were not made on the Möbius system. The single-sided tape was loosely coiled inside a plastic cassette with a projecting loop. A sort of spider device took care of proper guidance of the tape inside the cassette.

The new Tefifon was put into mass production and over the years many improvements were applied by Dr. Daniel. The tape speed was reduced in 1954 to  $7\frac{1}{2}$  i. p. s. With six grooves per mm. it was possible to obtain a playing time of four hours on small players. In competition with the still young l. p. discs a considerable repertoire was recorded. The 1954/5 catalogue contained 264 longplay tapes with mainly entertainment music, although there were also classical, operatic and spoken word recordings.

The Tefifon had in those days a number of important advantages. The length of playing time surely was the most important item. Restaurants and hotels in particular were interested clients since with this system the tedious changing of disc records was obsolete. But there were other aspects: compared with discs, the tape, like the Edison cylinder, had constant linear speed, and both cutter and playing needle always had the same relative position to the groove. Also, no skating effect was observed, and the tape was well protected from damage by its cassette.

A useful device enabled the user to skip grooves by a remote control wire, in order to find the correct place on a tape. No 'quick spooling' was necessary. The Tefifon was simply constructed and practically foolproof.

The production of the endless tapes was very interesting. As with 78s, a recording was laterally cut in wax, but on a length of film rather than on a disc. The waxed film was electro-plated with silver and by the normal Galvanic process,

'pressing films' were made. These matrix films were pressed under heat against the plastic film between rollers. Many pressings could be taken from one matrix film.

For anybody who has held disc matrixes in the hand, this process must seem fairly amazing. Disc matrixes are heavy enough: the chromium steel area is backed by a very thick layer of copper. Imagine a strip 5/8-in. wide and perhaps 1/8-in. thick with a length of over 100 feet (four-hour tapes at  $7\frac{1}{2}$  i.p.s., with a  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch grooved area had that length)..... It really is a pity that the company, which is still in existence, was not able to give more facts than used in this article.

Another breathtaking process was the seamless coupling of the two ends. This was done with a high-frequency heated matrix press, containing the positives of the grooves at the relevant part. (DRP 666 926)

Tefifon was able to enlarge its share of the market until the end of the fifties, despite the progress of the l.p. Even a stereo Tefifon was marketed, as well as players on which disc records of all speeds could be played (some magnetic wire recorders were similarly equipped).

The idea of a broad tape with many tracks was also applied to magnetic tape recording in the fifties. The German company Nora developed their Selectophon T5 around 1957. This was a combined tape recorder and disc player with three tape speeds ( $3\frac{1}{4}$ ,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  and 8 i.p.s.) and with a three-speed disc drive. Like the pre-war Tefifon, the tape was 35mm. wide and could contain 70 connected tracks. The tape was housed in a book-shaped container, rather similar to the Tefifon cassettes. Unlike the Tefifon, home recording was possible with this. A track selector was provided, another feature shared with the Tefifon. At a speed of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  i.p.s. a maximum playing time of  $4\frac{1}{2}$  hours was possible.

Many Tefi-tapes were produced in the ten years or so of the Tefifon's existence. Since the great stars were under contract to the big disc companies, one looks in vain for their names on Tefi-tape. Those collecting recordings of well-known artists need pay no attention to the Tefifon, but for those who are interested in the history of sound recording and reproduction the possession of a Tefifon player and tapes is another matter.

Peter Czada (Berlin) and Frans Jansen (The Hague) Copyright October 1982.

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